

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

THE ANATOMY AND SURGICAL TREATMENT OF HERNIA. By HENRY O. MARCY, A.M., M.D., LL.D. Quarto, 421 pages. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1893.

One is impressed in turning over the leaves of this book that the author has put his own individuality into it to a marked degree, and that in the clear, large type, the broad margins, the thick paper, the reproductions of plates that had illustrated the books on the same subject by writers of previous generations, there is simply an expression of the dignity in the author's own mind which the subject of hernia has held, which he has thus striven to communicate to the book itself. The author has evidently been a student of the literature of the past, and the pleasure which he himself has received in scanning the pages of Cooper, Scarpa, Cloquet and others, he has hoped to give to others in turn by reproducing for this generation much of the work of these old masters as an introduction to a critical study of the present state of knowledge and practice in the surgery of hernia.

For more than twenty years Dr. Marcy has been enthusiastically interested in the possibilities which the new surgery has opened for the relief of hernia. The questions of disinfection, of drainage, of special methods and materials of suture have from time to time engaged his attention, and in his numerous writings and addresses have been already brought to the attention of the profession. In the present volume, however, they are all brought to bear upon the one subject, the management of hernia. In some measure, certainly, the present volume must be considered as the crown of many years of active professional life. Its conclusions are those of a mature and experienced surgeon, and hence gain in both interest and weight.

The author accepts the estimate that between one-eighth and

one-sixteenth of human beings are the subjects of hernia, and that a mortality of 1 to 600 of deaths is attributable to it. He has essayed to present a complete treatise on the subject, limiting himself, however, with one exception, to those forms of hernia which produce an external tumor. This exception is that of diaphragmatic hernia. That he should have excluded from any systematic consideration the various forms of internal retro-peritoneal hernia must be a source of regret, for it unquestionably detracts from the completeness of the work as a treatise upon hernia. There is given a list of ten varieties of external hernia, but neither in the list nor in later discussions is any reference made to the important varieties of inguino-properitoneal and of lumbar hernia.

Chapter II takes up the anatomy of the parts involved in inguinal hernia. This chapter is illustrated by reproductions of plates from Darrach, Cooper, Bourgerie, Morton and Guthrie. Quotations from Scarpa, Cooper, Warren and Lawrence are freely used to give thoroughness to the descriptions of the parts.

Chapter III deals with congenital hernia. The original description of Pott is quoted at length; a description of specimens in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England is given, and a case is detailed, reported by Hulke, which presented some unusual features.

With Chapter IV begins his discussion of inguinal hernia, a topic which, in its various phases of anatomy, varieties, complications and treatment, occupies this and the three succeeding chapters. They are abundantly illustrated, and contain many references to and extracts from the writings of others. The critical reader might complain of a certain diffuseness of style and lack of systematic arrangement of the matter, but this is compensated for by the general interest of the matter presented, and, inasmuch as the book is one for the reference of the experienced practitioner rather than for a guide to the student, this feature is readily forgiven. A more important criticism is that the author, by the preponderating place which operative means for the relief of hernia assume in his thought, is led to assign

altogether too small a space to less radical measures of treatment. Trusses receive a very brief consideration. The value of trusses in the treatment of the herniæ of children, the possibilities of securing permanent relief by the use of a truss in cases of recent rupture engage but little of his attention. Since undoubtedly the great mass of the ruptured will continue to depend upon trusses for relief, a more full discussion of this aspect of hernia might have been looked for.

For irreducible inguinal hernia, as a class, the author recommends operative measures, a recommendation from which few, if any, surgeons of the present day will dissent.

The subject of herniotomy, as an operation, is considered in connection with the treatment of strangulated inguinal hernia. The author urges that no operation should be considered finished without making an attempt at permanent cure. The method which he advocates consists in freeing and drawing down the sac, suturing it as deeply as possible and excising the redundant portion, lifting up the cord and drawing it to the outer angle of the wound, closing the internal ring by deep sutures as snugly as possible without strangulating the vessels of the cord, permitting then the cord to fall into its place in the restored inguinal canal, and, lastly, closing the superficial layers of tissue over the cord by suitable buried sutures, without drainage. He uses kangaroo tendon as a suture material and employs the subcuticular suture for the skin.

In succeeding chapters the remaining varieties of hernia are each more or less fully discussed. The chapter on umbilical hernia is especially satisfactory and is one of the best in the book. Prominence is given to the operative cure of this form of hernia, and the opinion is expressed that the time is not far distant when the cure of this oftentimes disabling and dangerous condition will be considered as safe and simple as an exploratory laparotomy.

In the chapter on diaphragmatic hernia an endorsement is given to exploratory incision and to attempts at closure of the opening in the diaphragm, coupled with the statement that the author has not

been able to find record of any instance in which such attempts have been made. An examination of a file of the *ANNALS OF SURGERY* for three years back would have given him reports of three such cases, two reported by Dalton, of St. Louis, in Vol. IX, 1889, p. 93, and one by O'Dwyer, of New York, in Vol. XI, 1890, p. 124.

The last six chapters of the work are devoted to the discussion of the operative cure of hernia. In these are given the earlier methods of dealing with hernia, followed by quite full accounts of the recent work of both European and American surgeons. It is evident that the author has aimed to acquaint the reader with everything of value that has been proposed in this field; for this purpose he has introduced many and extended quotations from the writings of the operators referred to, so that one who has read this work may feel that he is fully acquainted with all that had been proposed for the relief of hernia up to the time of its going to press. At the close of these quotations the author expresses himself as believing that they show that operation for the radical cure of hernia is justifiable in a very wide range of cases, and that when done under the technique of aseptic surgery it involves risks no greater than those which attend the minor operations of surgery. He sums it up in the statement "that there can be little doubt that the surgery of the future will include a large percentage of the sufferers from hernia which the conservative surgery of to-day relegates to the truss-bearing army of invalids."

We think, however, that Dr. Marcy lays himself open to the fair criticism of somewhat overrating the amount of invalidism which the average truss-wearer is the subject of, and of underrating the difficulties and risks which are inherent in the operations proposed for its cure. Nevertheless his book, though aggressive and positive in its surgical aspects, is decidedly judicial and comprehensive in its statements of facts, and cannot fail to infuse sound and intelligent views as to the management of the disability of which it treats.

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